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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 000398

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SUBJECT: MOZAMBIQUE OUTREACH TOUR ENGAGES YOUTH ON THE U.S.

REF: STATE 21427

MAPUTO 00000398 001.2 OF 002

¶1. SUMMARY: Responding to excitement over the new U.S. Administration amongst our target population here, youth and students, and armed with helpful tools from our IIP Bureau as well as a special "Soft Power Gold" powerpoint designed by another FSO, the PAO and our Outreach Specialist took southern Mozambican schools by a storm all of last week, visiting 10 institutions and conducting 3 radio interviews on the new Administration and what Mozambicans think about our relations. We engaged directly with over 2,000 Mozambicans, mostly 15 - 25 years in age. Mozambique's own fascinating and complex history, in some ways deeply entwined with that of the U.S. made for a fertile ground for discussion. The response was energetic: Mozambicans' suggestions for improved mutual understanding follow below. END SUMMARY.

¶2. From March 16 - 20, we visited 10 different schools (high schools, teacher training academies and universities) in southern Mozambique, responding to both the local population's enthusiasm over our new Administration and also the March 6 cable "Soliciting Overseas Ideas to Increase Mutual Understanding" (ref). The story of the President resonates strongly here: Not only is he considered a "native son" because of his East African origins, but the story of the President's own parents is eerily similar to that of the founding father of this nation, revered as a national hero: Eduardo Mondlane. Mondlane was a brilliant young scholar when he was hand-selected to pursue university studies in the United States (Oberlin, then Northwestern) with the intent for him to return and lead an independent Mozambique. He met and married a young American girl from the Midwest (now widow and Mozambican resident Janet Mondlane) with whom he had three children.

¶3. Mondlane is considered the father of the independence movement and therefore Mozambique, although he did not live to see independence. President Guebuza has dedicated the entire year of 2009 as a commemoration of Mondlane, exactly 40 years after his death, believed to have been a letter bomb assassination by Portuguese colonial authorities when Mondlane was leading the independence movement from nearby Tanzania. Eduardo Mondlane's name graces the premier university (with faculties throughout the country and a student body of 20,000); the main avenue in Maputo; and numerous monuments and museums. School children all learn about Mondlane; we focused our tour in three provinces but with special outreach in Gaza province, from where Mondlane hails.

¶4. (Note: Janet Mondlane is currently publishing a series of volumes of Eduardo Mondlane's letters. Volume II, to be published soon, will highlight Eduardo's life in the United States, when his thoughts were greatly influenced by American ideals of race-free policies, open markets and transparency in government. Many believe

that had Eduardo survived, Mozambique would be a very different country than it is today.

15. During our presentations, we used the IIP-provided Biography channel film of President Obama as well as an enlightening and compelling power point presentation designed by Sao Paulo Political Officer David Brooks. The powerpoint, which takes audiences on a tour of U.S. history and race relations from the 18th century to the present argues that the election of the President was inevitable, and that the President's life converges with the own history of the United States. We distributed the "Barack Obama: 44th President"; the IIP-produced "Barack Obama: In His Own Words" (translated into Portuguese) and a number of other IIP-offered publications. Finally, our Outreach Specialist, also our Educational Advisor, promoted "Study USA" as well as our Fulbright, Humphrey and YES programs.

16. During our "Americana-Obamania" outreach tour, we emphasized the Secretary's intention to listen to the opinions of others as she aids the President in formulating and carrying out our foreign policies. We solicited in writing Mozambican responses to the questions, "What is the most important way to enhance mutual understanding between Mozambique and the U.S.?" The audiences jumped at the opportunity to write down their opinions.

17. Many of the answers were unsurprising: More exchange and scholarship programs, more opportunities for English language study and a visit by President Obama. Reflecting the heavy state presence, an astonishing number of students asked for the two nations' presidents to meet, debate or to hold a bilateral conference (rather than focusing on efforts by and for the people). More than any other, however, was the response asking for help in Mozambique's "luta contra pobreza absoluta" (fight against extreme poverty): agriculture, health (HIV/AIDS and malaria above all), and education. Many responders thanked us as a big step in itself to

MAPUTO 00000398 002.2 OF 002

improve relations.

18. The top 20 original and thoughtful responses, translated from Portuguese, follow below:

- a. "Build universities and invest in education"
- b. "Create civil society organizations in both nations that will advance bilateral relations"
- c. "Give scholarships at the undergraduate level"
- d. "Arrange cultural exchange groups (dance, theatre, cooking) between our two countries"
- e. "Organize international fairs to unite people"
- f. "Increase the Peace Corps presence"
- g. "Send more diplomats to Mozambique"
- h. "Write a book linking the similar histories of the Mondlanes and the Obamas"
- i. "Treat our two countries as equals"
- j. "Unite as one country Mozambique and the U.S."
- k. "Mozambicans need to work instead of asking for help; then, there will be better understanding"
- l. "Help us strengthen democracy here"
- m. "Help combat corruption, our biggest problem"
- n. "Stop the war in Iraq"
- o. "Come and visit our country's tourist destinations"
- p. "Create exchanges around sports and science"
- q. "Establish partnerships between American and Mozambican universities"
- r. "Link business people in both countries"
- s. "Support programs for women and children"
- t. "Ease visa and border restrictions for Muslims"

19. CONCLUSION: Our "Americana-Obamania Outreach Tour" (part I?) was designed to build on the excitement of President Obama's election and to take advantage at this moment of the possibility of a profound and unique opening of understanding towards the U.S. and Americans, not only because 2009 is the "Year of Eduardo Mondlane" and the upcoming book will reveal how the revered Mondlane was so greatly shaped by the United States. At a post-elections lunch with

Mondlane's elderly widow Janet, she had told us, "Now is the moment to bring our peoples together - reach out to them." Heeding her call, and that of the Department, we were eager to engage in this listening tour which earned us new contacts, a new presence in the towns we visited and hopefully new open doors to improve relations.

CHAPMAN